

V.A.7.N.e. Medium-tall temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse needle-leaved or microphyllous evergreen shrub layer

V.A.7.N.e.4. CHRYSOTHAMNUS VISCIDIFLORUS SHRUB HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE

Green Rabbitbrush Shrub Herbaceous Alliance

CHRYSOTHAMNUS VISCIDIFLORUS – ERICAMERIA PARRYI SHRUB HERBACEOUS VEGETATION [PROVISIONAL]

Green Rabbitbrush – Parry Rabbitbrush Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation

ELEMENT CONCEPT

GLOBAL SUMMARY: Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

USFWS Wetland System: Upland

Florissant Fossil Beds NM Environment: This shrub herbaceous vegetation occupies decomposing Pikes Peak granite gravels with fine silt and clay soil particles interspersed. Stand exposure ranged from northeast to southeast (60°-165°), and the slopes are moderately steep, from 5–11%. The sites are considered well-drained to rapidly drained. On similar sites elsewhere in the monument, this location would support an Arizona Fescue – Slimstem Muhly Grassland. Green Rabbitbrush – Parry Rabbitbrush Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation may become established because of a combination of disturbance by mammals historically and the dry soils of these exposures.

Global Environment: Not applicable.

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Florissant Fossil Beds NM Vegetation: Stands are less than 0.5 m tall and provide from 25–55% foliar cover for all species. The dominant dwarf-shrubs, e.g., *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus* and *Ericameria parryi*, *Artemisia frigida*, and *Gutierrezia sarothrae*, typically provide from 20–35% foliar cover. Grass species common to dwarf rabbitbrush stands include *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Muhlenbergia filiculmis*, *Festuca arizonica*, *Elymus elymoides*, and *Koeleria macrantha*, and they provide from 15–25% foliar cover. Foliar cover by forbs was less than 5% for all stands sampled and typically was in the range of 2–4%. The more common forbs observed included *Hymenoxys richardsonii*, *Geranium caespitosum*, and *Besseyia plantaginea*. Ground cover in the form of bare soil and small gravel derived from Pikes Peak granite typically averaged from approximately 60–70%. The remainder of ground cover for each stand was litter, covering from 30–40% of the unvegetated surface. Some burrowing activity by prairie dogs, other ground squirrels, and pocket gophers was observed on nearly every stand sampled, and it is possible that this plant association requires such disturbance/foraging activity to persist.

This association has a distinct dark gray aerial photo signature when viewing true color photography, and a dull pink photo signature on CIR.

Global Vegetation: Not applicable.

Global Dynamics: Not applicable.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Florissant Fossil Beds NM

Stratum

Dwarf-shrub
Graminoid
Forb

Species

Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus, *Ericameria parryi*, *Artemisia frigida*, *Gutierrezia sarothrae*
Bouteloua gracilis, *Muhlenbergia filiculmis*, *Festuca arizonica*
Hymenoxys richardsonii, *Besseyia plantaginea*

**Global
Stratum**

Species

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Florissant Fossil Beds NM

Stratum

Species

Dwarf-shrub

Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus, *Ericameria parryi*, *Artemisia frigida*, *Gutierrezia sarothrae*

Graminoid

Bouteloua gracilis, *Muhlenbergia filiculmis*

Forb

Besseyia plantaginea

**Global
Stratum**

Species

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

Florissant Fossil Beds NM

**Global
Stratum**

Species

GLOBAL SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS:

GLOBAL STATUS AND CLASSIFICATION COMMENTS

Global Conservation Status Rank: Not applicable.

Global Classification Comments: Not applicable.

ELEMENT DISTRIBUTION

Florissant Fossil Beds NM Range: *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus* - *Ericameria parryi* Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation is present on the slopes of low hills and ridges at the lower elevations (approximately 8325–8450 feet) within the monument.

Global Range: Not applicable

Nations: US

States/Provinces:

ELEMENT SOURCES

Florissant Fossil Beds NM Inventory Notes: Plots 34, 36, 37, 98

Classification Confidence: **Identifier:** To be determined.

REFERENCES: